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done, by their gratuitous labors, to extend the knowledge of such marine and fresh-water animals of the United States as form the food of fishes. The present report is wholly practical in its nature, comprising an inquiry into the decrease of the food fishes, and the propagation of food fishes in the waters of the United States. Appended to the report are essays, mostly taken from foreign sources, on fisheries and fish culture in the Old World. These essays are very suggestive, and it is to be expected that the results of experiments and studies made by the present commission will lead to discoveries and records of equal value, should the commission be maintained by the government for a sufficient number of years.

HYATT'S NORTH AMERICAN SPONGES.<sup>1</sup> — The second part of this elaborate revision of our North American sponges contains a good many novel and interesting facts regarding the influence of temperature and the nature of the sea-bottom upon the growth, variation, and distribution of our useful sponges, as well as the mode of fishing for and preparing them for the market. Professor Hyatt regards the sponges as forming "a distinct sub-kingdom or branch of animals, equivalent structurally to the Vertebrata or any of the larger divisions which are characterized by the most important structural differences." The excellence of the plates shows how well photography may be applied to the delineation of these animals.

RECENT BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS. — Reconciliation of Science and Religion. By Alexander Winchell, LL. D. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1877. 12mo, pp. 403.

Proceedings of the Davenport Academy of Natural Sciences. Vol. ii., Part I. January, 1876–June, 1877. Davenport, Iowa, July. 1877. 8vo, pp. 148. 3 plates.

Account of the Discovery of Inscribed Tablets. By Rev. J. Gass. With a Description by Dr. R. J. Farquharson. (Proceedings of the Davenport Academy of Natural Sciences, vol. ii.) Davenport, Iowa, July, 1877. 8vo, pp. 23. 3 plates.

List of the Vertebrated Animals now or lately living in the Gardens of the Zoological Society of London. Sixth Edition. London. 1877. 8vo, pp. 519, with cuts.

Zur Morphologie des Tracheensystems. Von Dr. J. A. Palmén. Helsingfors. 1877. 8vo, pp. 149. 2 plates.

Annual Report of the Entomological Society of the Province of Ontario for the year 1876. Toronto. 1877. 8vo, pp. 58.

On the Dispersal of Non-Migratory Insects by Atmospheric Agencies. By Albert Müller (Basileensis). (Reprinted from Trans. Ent. Soc. Lond. 1871.) Basle. 1877. 8vo, pp. 16.

Report of the Director of the Central Park Menagerie, Department of Public Parks, City of New York, for year 1876. New York. 1877. 8vo, pp. 34.

Bathybius und die Moneren. Von Ernst Haeckel. 8vo, pp. 12. 1877.

Brehm's Thierleben. Bd. 2. Heft i.–iv. Leipzig. 1877. New York: B. Westermann & Co. 40 cents a Heft.

De for Ager, Eng, og Have skadeligste Insekter og Smaakryb. Af W. M. Schoyen. Kristiania, 1875. 12mo, pp. 212. 8 plates.

<sup>1</sup> *Revision of the North American Porifera.* With Remarks upon Foreign Species. Part II. (Memoirs of the Boston Society of Natural History, vol. ii., Part IV., No. 5. Boston, May 29, 1877. 4to, pp. 73. 3 carbon photographs.

De i Husene skadeligste Insekter og Midder, der angribe og bedørve vore Madvarer, Kløder, Bohave og svrige Eiendele under Tag. Af W. M. Schoyen. Kristiania, 1876. 12mo, pp. 102. 3 plates.

Enumeratio Insectorum Norvegicorum. Fasciculum III. Catalogum Lepidopterorum Continentem. Auctore H. Siebke defuncto, edidit J. Sparre Schneider. Christiania, 1876. 8vo, pp. 188.

Enumeratio Insectorum Norvegicorum. Fasciculum IV. Catalogum Dipterorum Continentem. Auctore H. Siebke defuncto, edidit J. Sparre Schneider. Christiania, 1877. 8vo, pp. 255.

Some Remarkable Gravel Ridges in the Merrimac Valley. (Abstract.) By George F. Wright. (From the Proceedings of the Boston Society of Natural History, vol. xix.)

I. On the Brains of some Fish-Like Vertebrates. II. On the Serrated Appendages of the Throat of Amia. III. On the Tail of Amia. By Burt G. Wilder. 1876. 8vo, pp. 10, with a plate. (From the Proc. Am. Ass. Adv. Sci. Buffalo Meeting, August, 1876.)

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## GENERAL NOTES.

### BOTANY.<sup>1</sup>

**VIOLETS.** — Most of our readers are aware that many species of violets have, in summer, flowers which are totally unlike the showy, attractive blossoms of early spring; for instance, the lance-leaved violet and the arrow-leaved violet bear late, inconspicuous flowers, in which the petals are reduced to the merest rudiments, and only two or three stamens with pollen are present. Flowers of this sort have long been known, but they need to be more carefully examined with reference to their specific peculiarities. It is proposed to give in this note a preliminary sketch of the literature of the subject, in the hope that some of our botanists may collect and study the forms here referred to. Dillenius, in 1732, (Hort. Eltham, 408) observed that *Viola mirabilis* has flowers of two kinds: the spring flowers, with well-developed corolla and stamens seldom produce fruit, but the later flowers, in which he found stamens and no petals, always do. Linnæus (*Semina Muscorum Detecta*, 1732) refers to *Viola mirabilis* as one of the plants which had been thought to bear fruit without any antecedent blossoms; but he states that in the case of this plant, as in others referred to, blossoms with good stamens and pistils are present. It is said by Dr. Oliver that in a later work Linnæus remarks of *Viola mirabilis* that “the early flowers provided with a corolla are often barren, while others, appearing subsequently, and destitute of a corolla, are fertile.”

Conrad Sprengel (1793) refers to *Viola mirabilis* as bearing two kinds of flowers, but states that he had not had an opportunity of examining the plant.

In 1823, De Gingins, in his *Mémoire sur la Famille des Violacées*, page 11, writes that “most of the species of the section of violets properly so-called have the singular property of sometimes producing incomplete

<sup>1</sup> Conducted by PROF. G. L. GOODALE.